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May 11, 2021

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

Jocelyn G. Boyd, Esquire  
Chief Clerk & Administrator  
Public Service Commission of South Carolina  
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100  
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

RE: Public Service Commission Review of South Carolina Code of Regulations Chapter 103  
Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 1-23-120(J) – S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 103-600 *et seq.*:  
Telecommunications Utilities  
**Docket No. 2020-247-A**

Dear Ms. Boyd:

This letter is to notify the Public Service Commission that the Office of Regulatory Staff intends to participate in the Commission's workshop regarding its telecommunications regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 103-600 *et seq.*, scheduled for Friday, May 21, 2021. ORS also offers the following comments and recommendations.

1. Update to Authorized Telephone Utility Representative Information.

ORS recommends that S.C. Code Regulation §103-612.2.4., "Authorized Telephone Utility Representative", be expanded as follows to include certain additional contacts currently provided for on the Commission's authorized representative form:

2.4. Authorized Telephone Utility Representative.

Each telephone utility shall maintain with the commission and furnish a copy to the ORS, the name, title, address, and telephone number of the persons who should be contacted in connection with:

- a. General Management Duties;
- b. Customer Relations (Complaints);
- c. Engineering Operations;
- d. Test and Repairs;
- e. Emergencies During Non-Office Hours;
- f. Regulatory Officer;
- g. Annual Report;
- h. Dual Party Invoice;
- i. Universal Service Fund;
- j. Gross Receipts; and
- k. Lifeline (ETC's only).

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2. Update to Interruption of Service Reporting Requirements.

ORS recommends that regulation 103-614, entitled “Interruption of Service,” be amended to require telephone utilities to report major equipment or infrastructure outages lasting more than 24 hours. Based on its experience, ORS recommends providing additional guidance regarding the types of interruptions for which reporting is required. This additional guidance will assist ORS, as well as the Commission, in receiving timely information regarding service interruptions in order to work with affected utilities and to carry out ORS’s regulatory responsibilities. ORS recommends Regulation 103-614 be amended to read as follows:

103–614. Interruption of Service.

Each telephone utility shall keep a record of any condition resulting in any interruption of service affecting its entire system or major division of a telephone exchange, including a statement of the time, duration, cause of any such interruption, and steps taken to correct the interruption. Service outages impacting a significant portion of customers and outages or failures of major company infrastructure (such as cable facility, switching facility (main or remote) or carrier facility) lasting more than 24 hours shall be reported to the commission and copy provided electronically to the ORS. The utility shall report any information required to be reported to the FCC regarding outages to the commission and provide a copy electronically to the ORS. This information should be submitted as soon as practicable, and a copy of any written report submitted to any Federal jurisdictional entity shall also be submitted to the commission and a copy provided to the ORS.

3. Strike Regulations Implementing Repealed S.C. Code Ann. 58-9-2540.

South Carolina Code Section 58-9-2540, formerly titled “Advisory committee,” was repealed by 2016 Act No. 181. Section 58-9-2540 formerly provided that “[t]he commission may appoint an advisory committee to monitor the statewide telecommunications relay access service and advise and make recommendations to the commission in pursuing services which meet the needs of the hearing or speech impaired . . . .” Regulations 103-680, 103-681, 103-682, 103-683, and 103-684 implemented Section 58-9-2540 by establishing the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Committee, the role of that committee, its composition, meetings, and process for review and approval of decisions of that committee. Due to the repeal of Section 58-9-2540, ORS recommends that Regulations 103-680, 103-681, 103-682, 103-683, and 103-684 be repealed as well.

4. Update Regulations to Reflect Removal of Link-Up from Federal Lifeline Program.

ORS recommends the following updates to remove references to Link Up service. Link Up is no longer a part of the federal Lifeline program.

- Strike the definition of “Link Up Service,” Reg. 103-690.B.5.
- Amend Reg. 103-690.C.(a)(1)(C) as follows:

(C) for carriers seeking certification in areas not eligible for High Cost Support from the USF, but seeking ETC designation for the purpose of participation in the Lifeline and Link Up programs, the following shall apply in lieu of paragraph (B) above: shall submit a two-year plan that describes the carrier’s plans for advertising and outreach programs for identifying, qualifying, and enrolling eligible participants in the Lifeline and Link Up programs. All other provisions of this subsection shall apply.



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- Amend Reg. 103-690.1.B.(b)(9) as follows:  
  
(9) the number of Lifeline customers ~~and the number of customers~~ that received Link Up assistance as of December 31st of the prior year;
  - Amend the first sentence of Reg. 103-690.1.B.(b)(11) as follows:  
  
(11) For ETCs not eligible for High Cost Fund support, but participating in the Lifeline ~~and Link Up~~ programs, subsections (1) and (2) shall be waived.
  - Amend the title of Reg. 103-690.1.E as follows:  
  
E. ETC Requirements for Lifeline ~~and Link Up~~ Services.
  - Strike Reg. 103-690.1.E.(b), including Reg. 103-690.1.E.(b)(1). This regulation is a guideline for publicizing the availability of Link Up service.
5. Strike Regulations 103-690.C.(a)(5) and 103-690.1.B.(b)(8)

Regulations 103-690.C.(a)(5) and 103-690.1.B.(b)(8) currently require certifications by a telephone utility acknowledging “that the Federal Communications Commission may require it to provide equal access to long distance carriers in the event that no other eligible telecommunications carrier is providing equal access within the service area.” However, the FCC no longer requires ETC’s to provide such service. To avoid confusion, ORS recommends that these regulations be stricken.

ORS appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments and looks forward to participating in the Commission’s May 21<sup>st</sup> workshop.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alexander W. Knowles  
Alexander W. Knowles

cc: All Parties of Record (via e-mail)  
David Butler, Esquire (via e-mail)